

# Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

## School Year 2021-22

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The requirements for the preschool meal patterns are the same as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and are defined by the USDA's final rule, [\*Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010\*](#). For a comparison of each program's meal pattern requirements for the grains component, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, [\*Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs\*](#).

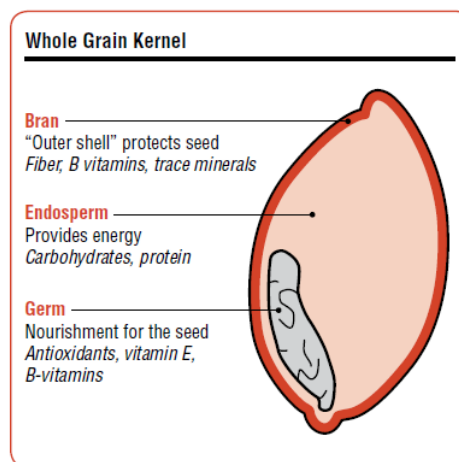
For information on the meal patterns and crediting foods for grades K-12, visit the CSDE's webpages, [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#), and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#). For information on the meal patterns and crediting foods for preschoolers, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Whole-grain products and recipes credit as the grains component in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel, after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. The kernel includes the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ.

Usually the grain kernel is cracked, crushed, flaked, or ground during the milling process. A finished grain product is considered whole grain if it contains the same relative amounts of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain.

Whole grains contain a wide variety of nutrients that help reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The CSDE encourages school food authorities (SFAs) to serve 100 percent whole-grain products most often. This provides the best nutrition for children.



# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

The meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers have different WGR requirements and crediting criteria. WGR foods are required in the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, and the meal patterns for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and ASP. WGR foods are not required in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. As a best practice, the CSDE encourages ASP sponsors to serve WGR grains.

## Grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO

All grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. For information on the WGR criteria for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's guides, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#) and [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

**Note:** Per USDA memo, [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #90: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#), SFAs that cannot meet the WGR requirement during school year 2021-22 (through June 30, 2022) must request a waiver from the CSDE. For more information, visit the “[How To](#)” section of the CSDE's Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks webpage. If the SFA has not applied to and received approval from the CSDE for this waiver, all grains served in school meals during school year 2021-22 must continue to be WGR.

## Grades K-12 in the ASP

The ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 do not have a WGR requirement. SFAs may credit any commercial products and standardized recipes that contain a sufficient quantity of creditable grains. Creditable grains for the ASP include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. For best nutrition, the CSDE encourages SFAs to serve WGR foods in the ASP. **Note:** Bran and germ do not credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12.

## Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP

The requirements for the preschool meal patterns are the same as the meal patterns for the CACFP. At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For information on the WGR requirements for the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's guide for the CACFP, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP](#), and [USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Questions and Answers](#).

# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

**Note:** Per USDA memo, [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #90: Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#), SFAs that cannot meet the preschool WGR requirement during school year 2021-22 (through June 30, 2022) must request a waiver from the CSDE. For more information, visit the [“How To”](#) section of the CSDE’s Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 Outbreaks webpage.

## Serving the same WGR foods to preschoolers and grades K-12

SFAs must consider the different WGR requirements when making menu planning and purchasing decisions for school meals that include grades K-12 and preschoolers. When SFAs serve the same WGR foods to both groups, these foods must comply with the stricter WGR requirements for grades K-12. Grain foods that meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12 will meet the preschool WGR criteria. However, grain foods that meet the preschool WGR criteria may or may not meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12. **Note:** Grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns, even if they are WGR.

For a comparison of the grain requirements, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs](#). For additional guidance, visit the [“Serving the Same Menu to Preschoolers and Grades K-12”](#) section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## 100 Percent Whole Grain Products

A commercial product is 100 percent whole grain if all grain ingredients are whole grains. The ingredients statements below show some examples of 100 percent whole-grain commercial products.

- Ingredients: *Whole-wheat flour*, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of mono-diglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono-and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.
- Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, *whole oats*, sugar, wheat gluten, yeast, soybean oil, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), monoglycerides, datem and/or sodium stearoyl lactylate, calcium sulfate, citric acid, calcium carbonate, soy lecithin, whey, nonfat milk.

Commercial products that are 100 percent whole grain meet the WGR criteria for the meal patterns for grades K-12 and the WGR criteria for the preschool meal patterns.

# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Identifying Whole Grains in Commercial Products

A grain is whole grain if it meets any of the criteria below. [Table 1](#) lists examples of whole-grain products and ingredients.

### Grain name states “whole”

A grain is whole grain if the grain name contains the word “whole.” For example, “whole wheat flour” and “whole-grain corn” are whole grains, but “wheat flour” and “yellow corn” are not.

### Other names for whole grains

Some grains that do not contain the word “whole” in the grain name are whole grains. Examples include berries (whole kernels of grain) such as wheat berries and rye berries; groats (hulled whole kernels of grain) such as oat groats; rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal); brown rice and wild rice; graham flour (coarsely ground whole-wheat flour); and many other grains such as quinoa, millet, triticale, teff, amaranth, buckwheat, and sorghum.

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity

Some whole-wheat products have an FDA standard of identity that indicates they are whole grain. A standard of identity is a set of rules for what a certain product, such as whole-wheat bread, must contain or may contain to be legally labeled with that product name. The FDA provides standards of identity only for certain whole-wheat products, including whole-wheat bread, rolls, and buns ([21 CFR 136.180](#)) and whole-wheat macaroni products ([21 CFR 139.138](#)). These products include:

- whole-wheat bread, rolls, and buns;
- entire wheat bread, rolls, and buns;
- graham bread, rolls, and buns (does **not** include graham crackers); and
- whole-wheat spaghetti, vermicelli, macaroni, and macaroni products.

Other grain products that are labeled as “whole wheat” but do not have an FDA standard of identity (such as crackers, tortillas, bagels, and biscuits) may or may not be 100 percent whole grain.



# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Nixtamalized corn ingredients

Commercial corn products such as tortilla chips, taco shells, and tamales credit as whole grains if the product is labeled “whole grain” or the corn ingredient is nixtamalized (treated with lime).

Nixtamalization is the process of soaking and cooked dried corn in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with nutrition content similar to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa is used for making tortilla chips, taco shells, tamales, pupusas, and other popular corn products. Hominy, corn masa, and masa harina credit as whole grains.



SFAs may use the two methods below to determine if commercial grain products are made with nixtamalized corn.

1. **The corn is treated with lime:** If the ingredients statement indicates that the corn is treated with lime (such as “ground corn with trace of lime” and “ground corn treated with lime”), the corn ingredient is nixtamalized. The ingredients statements below show examples of commercial nixtamalized corn products. These products credit as 100 percent whole grains.
  - Ingredients: *Corn masa flour*, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).
  - Ingredients: *Whole-white corn*, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, *lime/ calcium hydroxide* (processing aid).
  - Ingredients: *Limed whole-grain white corn*, palm oil, salt, TBHQ (preservative).
  - Ingredients: *Whole-grain yellow corn*, high oleic canola oil, water, *corn flour*, salt, *hydrated lime*.

**Note:** To meet the WGR criteria for grades K-12, any other grains listed in the ingredients statement must be enriched, and the combined weight of all noncreditable grains cannot exceed the required limit. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information (such as “cornmeal” and “yellow corn flour”), SFAs must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer stating that ingredients are whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. For information on PFS forms, refer to “[Crediting Documentation for Commercial Whole-grain Products](#)” in this document.

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

2. **The product includes the FDA-approved whole grain health claim:** If a commercial product made with corn includes one of two FDA-approved whole grain health claims on its packaging, the corn in the product is at least 50 percent whole grain.
- **Low-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”
  - **Moderate-fat claim:** “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”

These health claims are not common.

Products that contain an FDA whole-grain health claim credit as the grains component and meet the CACFP WGR criteria.

Crediting information for corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal is summarized in [USDA Memo SP 34-2019](#), [CACFP 15-2019](#) and [SFSP 15-2019](#): *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs*.

### Reconstituted grains

Reconstituted grains (such as “reconstituted whole-wheat flour”) are made by blending the crushed and separated products of milling (bran, germ, and endosperm) from the same type of grain in the same proportions originally present in the intact grain kernel. A reconstituted grain is considered whole grain when the reconstitution is done by the original milling facility to ensure the same batch of whole grain is returned to its natural proportions. To credit a reconstituted grain in school meals, SFAs must request documentation stating that the milling company recombined the grain components to the natural proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm.



# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

**Table 1. Whole-grain products and ingredients <sup>1</sup>**

<p><b>Barley</b></p> <p>Dehulled barley</p> <p>Dehulled-barley flour</p> <p>Whole barley</p> <p>Whole-barley flakes</p> <p>Whole-barley flour</p> <p>Whole-grain barley</p> <p>Whole-grain barley flour</p> <p><b>Brown rice</b></p> <p>Brown rice</p> <p>Brown rice flour</p> <p>Sprouted brown rice</p> <p><b>Corn</b></p> <p>Corn masa (whole corn treated with lime) <sup>2</sup></p> <p>Cornmeal, nixtamalized <sup>2</sup></p> <p>Hominy made from nixtamalized corn <sup>2</sup></p> <p>Masa harina (corn flour) <sup>2</sup></p> <p>Whole corn</p> <p>Whole-corn flour</p> <p>Whole cornmeal</p> <p>Whole-grain corn</p> <p>Whole-grain corn flour</p> <p>Whole-grain grits</p> <p>Whole-ground corn</p> <p><b>Oats</b></p> <p>Instant oats</p> <p>Oat groats <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Oatmeal</p> <p>Old-fashioned oats</p> <p>Quick-cooking oats</p> <p>Rolled oats</p> <p>Steel-cut oats</p> <p>Whole oats</p> <p>Whole-oat flour</p> <p>Whole-grain oat flakes</p> <p>Whole-grain oat flour</p>	<p><b>Rye</b></p> <p>Whole rye</p> <p>Rye berries <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Rye groats <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Sprouted whole rye</p> <p>Whole-rye flour</p> <p>Whole-rye flakes</p> <p><b>Wheat (red) <sup>4</sup></b></p> <p>Bulgur (cracked wheat)</p> <p>Bromated whole-wheat flour</p> <p>Cracked wheat</p> <p>Crushed wheat</p> <p>Entire-wheat flour</p> <p>Graham flour</p> <p>Sprouted whole wheat</p> <p>Sprouted wheat berries <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Stone ground whole-wheat flour <sup>5</sup></p> <p>Toasted crushed whole wheat</p> <p>Wheat berries <sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>Wheat (white) <sup>6</sup></b></p> <p>Wheat groats <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Whole bulgur</p> <p>Whole durum flour</p> <p>Whole durum wheat flour</p> <p>Whole-grain bulgur</p> <p>Whole-grain wheat</p> <p>Whole-grain wheat flakes</p> <p>Whole-grain wheat flour</p> <p>Whole wheat</p> <p>Whole-wheat flour</p> <p>Whole-wheat pastry flour</p> <p>Whole-wheat flakes</p> <p>Whole white wheat</p> <p>Whole white wheat flour</p>
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# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

**Table 1. Whole-grain products and ingredients <sup>1</sup>**

<p><b>Wild rice</b> Wild rice Wild rice flour</p> <p><b>Other grains</b> Amaranth Amaranth flour Buckwheat Buckwheat flour Buckwheat groats <sup>3</sup> Einkorn Einkorn berries Einkorn flour Emmer (farro) Kamut® Millet Millet flour</p>	<p><b>Other grains, <i>continued</i></b> Quinoa Sorghum (milo) Sorghum flour Spelt Spelt berries Sprouted buckwheat Sprouted einkorn Sprouted spelt Teff Teff flour Triticale Triticale flour Whole-grain spelt flour</p>
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<sup>1</sup> This list is not all-inclusive.

<sup>2</sup> Hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and cornmeal must be nixtamalized to credit as whole grains (refer to “[Nixtamalized corn ingredients](#)” in this document).

<sup>3</sup> Groats and berries are the hulled kernels of cereal grains such as oat, wheat, rye, and barley.

<sup>4</sup> Red wheat is the most common kind of wheat in the United States.

<sup>5</sup> “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal and does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement to be sure it includes the term “whole” in combination with “stone ground.”

<sup>6</sup> White whole-wheat products are lighter in color and lack the slightly bitter taste associated with the bran in red wheat. Read labels carefully to be sure products are “white whole wheat” and not “white wheat,” which is not a whole grain.





# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

**Table 1. Whole-grain products and ingredients <sup>1</sup>, *continued***

<p>Sprouted wheat berries <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Stone ground whole-wheat flour <sup>5</sup></p> <p>Toasted crushed whole wheat</p> <p>Wheat berries <sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>Wheat (white) <sup>6</sup></b></p> <p>Wheat groats <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Whole bulgur</p> <p>Whole durum flour</p> <p>Whole durum wheat flour</p> <p>Whole-grain bulgur</p> <p>Whole-grain wheat</p> <p>Whole-grain wheat flakes</p> <p><b>Wild rice</b></p> <p>Wild rice</p> <p>Wild rice flour</p> <p><b>Other grains</b></p> <p>Amaranth</p> <p>Amaranth flour</p> <p>Buckwheat</p> <p>Buckwheat flour</p> <p>Buckwheat groats <sup>3</sup></p> <p>Einkorn</p>	<p><b>Other grains, <i>continued</i></b></p> <p>Einkorn berries</p> <p>Einkorn flour</p> <p>Emmer (farro)</p> <p>Kamut®</p> <p>Whole wheat</p> <p>Whole-wheat flour</p> <p>Whole-wheat pastry flour</p> <p>Whole-wheat flakes</p> <p>Whole white wheat</p> <p>Whole white wheat flour</p> <p>Millet</p> <p>Millet flour</p> <p>Quinoa</p> <p>Sorghum (milo)</p> <p>Spelt</p> <p>Spelt berries</p> <p>Sprouted buckwheat</p> <p>Sprouted einkorn</p> <p>Sprouted spelt</p> <p>Teff</p> <p>Teff flour</p> <p>Triticale</p> <p>Triticale flour</p> <p>Whole-grain spelt flour</p>
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<sup>1</sup> This list is not all-inclusive.

<sup>2</sup> Hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and cornmeal must be nixtamalized to credit as whole grains (refer to “[Nixtamalized corn ingredients](#)” in this document).

<sup>3</sup> Groats and berries are the hulled kernels of cereal grains such as oat, wheat, rye, and barley.

<sup>4</sup> Red wheat is the most common kind of wheat in the United States.

<sup>5</sup> “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal and does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement for “whole” in combination with “stone ground.”

<sup>6</sup> White whole-wheat products are lighter in color and lack the slightly bitter taste associated with the bran in red wheat. Read labels carefully to be sure products are “white whole wheat” and not “white wheat,” which is not a whole grain.

# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## What Does Not Indicate Whole Grain Content

Menu planners cannot use the following information to determine if a commercial grain product contains whole grains: certain statements about grain content on the product's package; the product's color; or the product's fiber content. This information does not indicate whether a grain product contains whole grains.

### Label statements about grain content

Careful label reading is important because the packaging for grain products can be misleading. Manufacturers often use terms in their product names or labels that make a product appear to contain a significant amount of whole grain when it does not.

Table 2 includes some common misleading terms found on product packages. Products with these terms are usually not 100 percent whole grain. They often contain refined flour (or other ingredients that are not whole grain) as the first or second ingredient.

Table 2. Common misleading terms for grains	
"Made with whole grains"	These products must have some whole grains but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
"Made with whole wheat"	These products must have some whole wheat but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole wheat can vary greatly among different products.
"Contains whole grain"	These products may contain a small amount of whole grain but usually are mostly refined grains. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
"100% wheat"	All breads made from any part of the wheat kernel are 100 percent wheat, which is not the same as 100 percent <b>whole</b> wheat. "100% wheat" products may contain some whole-wheat flour or may contain only refined flour. Look for the terms "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grain" to indicate that the product is made from only whole grains.
"Multigrain" or specifies number of grains, e.g., "seven-grain bread"	These products must contain more than one type of grain, which can include refined grains, whole grains, or both. Some multigrain breads may have enriched flour as the primary ingredient with multiple grains in smaller amounts, while others contain mostly whole grains.

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

**Table 2. Common misleading terms for grains, *continued***

“Cracked wheat bread”	While cracked wheat is a whole grain, cracked wheat bread may contain refined flour as the primary ingredient with small amounts of cracked wheat.
“Stone ground” flour or meal	“Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. It does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement to be sure it includes the term “whole” in combination with “stone ground.”

### Whole grain stamp

The [Whole Grains Council](#) provides three stamps that manufacturers may use on product packaging to identify foods that contain whole grains. The USDA does not allow these stamps to determine if grain products meet the WGR criteria for the grains component. While these stamps indicate that a product is made with or contains 100 percent whole grains, they are not sufficient to determine if a food meets the WGR criteria because they do not indicate if all other grains in the product are enriched or if any noncreditable grains comply with the USDA’s limit for noncreditable grains.



To determine compliance with the WGR criteria for the grains component, SFAs must refer to the product’s ingredients statement and packaging and, if necessary, obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. For information on PFS forms, refer to “[Crediting Documentation for Commercial Whole-grain Products](#)” in this document.

### Color

A product’s color does not indicate whether it contains whole grains. While whole-grain products are usually browner than products made with refined white flour, sometimes the brown color comes from caramel coloring or molasses, not from whole-grain ingredients. Read the ingredients statement or the recipe to determine if the food contains any whole grains.

### Fiber content

Whole grains and fiber both provide health benefits, but they are not the same. The fiber content on the Nutrition Facts label is not a good indicator of whether a commercial product contains whole grains. Grain-based foods that are good sources of fiber, such as bran cereal, may contain added fibers but few or no whole grains. The Nutrition Facts label lists total fiber, which includes naturally occurring fiber and sources added by the manufacturer, such as cellulose, inulin, and chicory root.

# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Crediting Documentation for Commercial Whole-grain Products

SFAs must be able to document that commercial grain foods meet the crediting requirements of the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information to determine if a grain product or combination food is whole grain, SFAs must obtain a Child Nutrition (CN) label (available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component) or a manufacturer's product formulation statement (PFS). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#), and the USDA's handouts, [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

### When a PFS is required

SFAs must obtain a PFS for commercial whole-grain products when any of the following apply:

- a whole grain is not the first ingredient, but the product contains more than one whole grain;
- a combination food that contains a grain portion is not CN labeled;
- the manufacturer claims that the product's serving size is less than the required weight or volume in the USDA's Exhibit A chart; or
- the product is not listed in the USDA's Exhibit A chart.

SFAs should verify the accuracy of the PFS prior to including the product in reimbursable meals and ASP snacks, and must maintain all crediting documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the commercial product cannot credit in the school nutrition programs

For additional guidance on documentation for commercial products, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP](#), and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Crediting Documentation for Whole-grain Foods Made from Scratch

SFAs must have standardized recipes on file that document the crediting information for all grain foods made from scratch, including foods made on site by the SFA and foods prepared by vendors. Menu planners should use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine food yields and crediting information for school recipes.

Standardized recipes that contain whole grains credit as the grains component based on the amount of whole grains per serving. SFAs must determine the recipe's ounce equivalents contribution per serving using one of the following methods: 1) the grams of creditable grains; or 2) if the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving is known, the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA's Exhibit A chart where the grain food belongs (refer to "Serving Size for Enriched Grain Products and Recipes" below).

For information on standardized recipes, refer to section 2 of the CSDE's guides, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) and [Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#), and visit the "Crediting Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Serving Size for Whole Grain Products and Recipes

Whole-grain products and foods made from scratch must provide the minimum quantities required by the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. The required grain quantities for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers are in ounce equivalents. The required grain quantities for the ASP meal pattern for preschoolers are in ounce equivalents. The required grain quantities for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 are in servings.

The amount of a whole-grain food that provides 1 ounce equivalent or 1 serving varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, an enriched roll must weigh 28 grams (1 ounce), a whole-grain corn muffin must weigh 34 grams (1.2 ounces), and a whole-grain blueberry muffin must weigh 55 grams (2 ounces). The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce equivalent.

The USDA allows two methods for determining the ounce equivalents or servings of a creditable grain product or standardized recipe. SFAs may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. These methods are summarized below.

### Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#), to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the

# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

product or recipe belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the SFA knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. For some commercial grain products, method 2 is required (refer to “[When a PFS is required](#)” in this document).

- **Ounce equivalents for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO:** The CSDE’s resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*, lists the Exhibit A grain ounce equivalents that apply to grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*. For more information on ounce equivalents for grades K-12, visit the “[Ounce Equivalents \(Serving Size for Grains\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs.
- **Ounce equivalents for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and ASP:** The CSDE’s resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*, lists the Exhibit A grain ounce equivalents that apply to the preschool meal patterns effective October 1, 2021. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP*. For more information on ounce equivalents for preschoolers, visit the “[Ounce Equivalents \(Serving Size for Grains\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus webpage.
- **Grain servings for grades K-12 in the ASP:** The CSDE’s resource, *Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP*, lists the required Exhibit A grains/breads servings that apply to grades K-12 in the ASP. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP*. For more information, visit the “[Serving Size for Grains/Breads](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

## Method 2: creditable grains

Method 2 determines the ounce equivalents from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for standardized recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving. The grams of creditable grains are listed in the commercial product’s PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFA’s recipe.

- **Ounce equivalents for grades K-12 in the NSLP, SBP, and SSO:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, whole-grain foods in groups A-G of the USDA’s Exhibit A chart must contain **16 grams** of whole grains and foods in groups H-I must contain **28 grams** of whole grains. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*. For more information on ounce equivalents for grades K-12, visit the “[Ounce Equivalents \(Serving Size for Grains\)](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

- **Ounce equivalents for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, SSO, and ASP:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, whole-grain foods in groups A-E of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain **16 grams** of whole grains and grain foods in group H must contain **28 grams** of whole grains. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP](#). For more information on ounce equivalents for preschoolers, visit the "[Ounce Equivalents \(Serving Size for Grains\)](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus webpage.
- **Grain servings for grades K-12 in the ASP:** To credit as 1 serving of the grains component, whole-grain foods in groups A-G of the USDA's Exhibit A chart must contain **14.75 grams** of whole grains and grain foods in group H must contain **25 grams** of whole grains. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#). For more information, visit the "[Serving Size for Grains/Breads](#)" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

### Grain crediting tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the ounce equivalents contribution of creditable grain products and recipes.

- **CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets** (use only for the preschool meal patterns): These Excel worksheets determine if grain products and recipes meet the CACFP crediting requirements and WGR criteria (which are the same as the preschool meal patterns) and calculate the ounce equivalents contribution of the serving.
  - Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP
  - Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP
  - Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP

The CACFP grain crediting worksheets are available in the "[Documents/Forms](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

- **USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This [online tool](#) of the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) determines the ounce equivalents of commercial grain products. For more information, watch the USDA's webinars, [Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue](#) and [How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool](#).
- **USDA's Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG's online [Recipe Analysis Workbook](#) allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA's FBG website.



# Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

## Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of grain foods that may cause choking include hard pretzels; pretzel chips; corn chips; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels (such as wheat berries), and hard chunks (such as granola); and crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of grain foods to offer in CACFP menus. This consideration is also important for children with a disability that requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Accepting\\_Proccsed\\_Product\\_Documentation\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Accepting_Proccsed_Product_Documentation_SNP.pdf)

Adding Whole Grains to Your CACFP Menu – Resources, training slides, and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/adding-whole-grains-your-cacfp-menu>

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE)

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP\\_Handbook.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP_Handbook.pdf)

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain\\_Calculation\\_SNP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Calculation_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf)

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain\\_Calculation\\_SNP\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Calculation_SNP_preschool.pdf)

Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Grain\\_Calculation\\_ASP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Grain_Calculation_ASP_grades_K-12.pdf)

Choking Prevention (CSDE’s Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#ChokingPrevention>

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison\\_Grain\\_Crediting\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Comparison_Grain_Crediting_SNP.pdf)

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit\\_Cereals\\_SNP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Cereals_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf)

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit\\_Cereals\\_SNP\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Cereals_SNP_preschool.pdf)

Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit\\_Enriched\\_Grains\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Enriched_Grains_SNP.pdf)

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grains\\_Oz\\_Eq\\_SNP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grains_Oz_Eq_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf)

Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Grain\\_Oz\\_Eq\\_SNP\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Grain_Oz_Eq_SNP_preschool.pdf)

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP – Handouts and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp>

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Grains>

Grains Component for Preschoolers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Related-Resources#Grains>

Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Afterschool-Snack-Program/Documents#GrainsBreadsK12>

Grains/Breads Servings for Grades K-12 in the ASP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Grain\\_Servings\\_ASP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/Grain_Servings_ASP_grades_K-12.pdf)

How to Identify Creditable Grains for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Identify\\_Creditable\\_Grains\\_SNP\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Identify_Creditable_Grains_SNP_preschool.pdf)

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents>

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR\\_Requirement\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf)

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGR\\_Requirement\\_SNP\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf)

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_Preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf)

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Grains\\_Oz\\_Eq\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf)

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Grains-Breads\\_Servings\\_Fillable\\_508.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains-Breads_Servings_Fillable_508.pdf)

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product\\_Formulation\\_Statements.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf)

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>

Resources for the Preschool Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources\\_Preschool\\_Meal\\_Patterns.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Resources_Preschool_Meal_Patterns.pdf)

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Resources\\_School\\_Meal\\_Patterns\\_grades\\_K-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Resources_School_Meal_Patterns_grades_K-12.pdf)

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP

Standardized Recipes (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#StandardizedRecipes>

USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-cacfp-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo CACFP 16-2017: Grain-Based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-based-desserts-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 30-2012: Grain Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/grain-requirements-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019 and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

## Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit\\_Whole\\_Grains\\_SNP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Whole_Grains_SNP.pdf).

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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